

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 EPG-02 DODE-00 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07

INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 USIA-06

OES-07 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 /104 W

-----086414 262116Z /64

P 262056Z JUL 77

FM AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3624

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

ALL CONSULATES GENERAL IN CANADA (BY POUCH)

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, CA

SUBJECT: ENERGY: WEST COAST OIL PORTS INQUIRY

REF: VANCOUVER 701

1. FOLLOWING IS COMMENT UPON WEST COAST OIL PORTS INQUIRY PROCEEDINGS WHICH WERE REPORTED UPON IN REFTEL.

2. IT IS CLEAR FROM THE LENGTHY OPENING STATEMENT OF COMMISSION COUNSEL AND STATEMENTS OF OPPONENTS TO WEST COAST OIL PORTS THAT INQUIRY WILL BE EXCEEDINGLY COMPLEX AND CONTENTIOUS. THERE IS MARKED POTENTIAL FOR ITS EXTENDING WELL BEYOND THE FIRST OF THE YEAR. COUNSEL STATED THAT "INQUIRY WILL EXAMINE THE BROADER CANADIAN CONCERNS AND ISSUES RELATED TO OIL TANKER MOVEMENT" AND "IT DOES NOT MATTER WHETHER APPLICATIONS...ARE BEFORE OTHER REGULATORY AUTHORITIES, IN ABEYANCE, ADJOURNED, OR MERELY THE FORLORN HOPE OF ENTERPRISING CORPORATIONS." HE FURTHER STATED INQUIRY MUST EXAMINE WHAT IS TAKING PLACE WITH REGARD TO OIL NOT ONLY WITHIN THE U.S.,

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BUT INTERNATIONALLY AS WELL. COUNSEL HAS ALSO ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSISTING ALL PARTICIPANTS IN INQUIRY IN OBTAINING DOCUMENTATION TO FACILITATE THEIR CASE PREPARATIONS. IN ADDITION, OPPONENTS OF THE VARIOUS PORT PROJECTS FLATLY STATE THEY WILL CROSS-EXAMINE WITNESSES EXTENSIVELY AND CALL FOR TESTIMONY FROM AS MANY OUTSIDE SPECIALISTS AND EXPERTS AS POSSIBLE.

3. DURING THE THREE DAYS OF THE OPENING STATEMENTS, DR. THOMPSON MADE NO ATTEMPT TO LIMIT EVEN THE MOST RAMBLING AND POORLY FOCUSED PRESENTATIONS. THIS WAS PROBABLY WISE, HOWEVER, AS NO ONE CAN NOW CLAIM HE DID NOT HAVE FULL FREEDOM TO STATE HIS CASE BEFORE THE GLARE OF THE TV CAMERAS. MORE WORRISOME IS FACT THAT DR. THOMPSON HAS NOT YET PROVIDED A TIMETABLE FOR

CONSIDERATION OF THE SIX PHASES OF THE INQUIRY (SEE PARA 3, REFTEL). WHILE PHASE I IS TO COMMENCE ON SEPTEMBER 7, THERE IS NO INDICATION OF ITS DURATION, NOR THE START-UP TIME FOR PHASE II. THIS LACK OF SPECIFICITY IS MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR SOME PARTICIPANTS TO PLAN THEIR SCHEDULES FOR SUBMITTING EVIDENCE AND ARRANGING FOR WITNESSES, ETC.

4. A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OFFICER TOLD ECONOFF THAT DR. THOMPSON, DURING A RECENT VISIT TO VICTORIA, TOLD B.C. OFFICIALS THAT WHILE THE HEARINGS MIGHT BE COMPLETED BY YEAR'S END, HE FORESAW POSSIBILITY HE WOULD HAVE TO REQUEST OTTAWA FOR AN EXTENSION OF SEVERAL MONTHS TO WRITE HIS REPORT. LUPPI

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